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Know Your Bristol On The Move

C. Anderson, R. Bickers, J. Carstairs, T. Cole, N. Eisenstadt, P. Insole, M. A. Jones, M. Gulliver, J. McLellan, K. Miller, N. Nourse, A. A. Piccini, J. Routledge, R. Skinner, M. Thomas, J. Warren, J. Williams

Introduction

The *Know Your Bristol On the Move* project (2013-15) is a collaboration between the University of Bristol, Bristol City Council and several community groups within the city. An award from the *Capital Funding Call for Digital Transformations in Community Research Co-Production* funded by the *Arts & Humanities Research Council* allowed the project team to explore models of co-production through the use of digital tools, which enabled people to explore, research and co-create Bristol's history, heritage and culture.

Digital Tools

Map Your Bristol

<http://www.mapyourbristol.org.uk>

Map Your Bristol was designed to enable communities to easily curate and share their own stories. Developed with *Drupal*, an open-source Content Management System, it was possible to create a system that allowed members of the public to explore Bristol's history through the context of historical maps and to easily add new places and share their stories and digital artefacts such as images and videos.



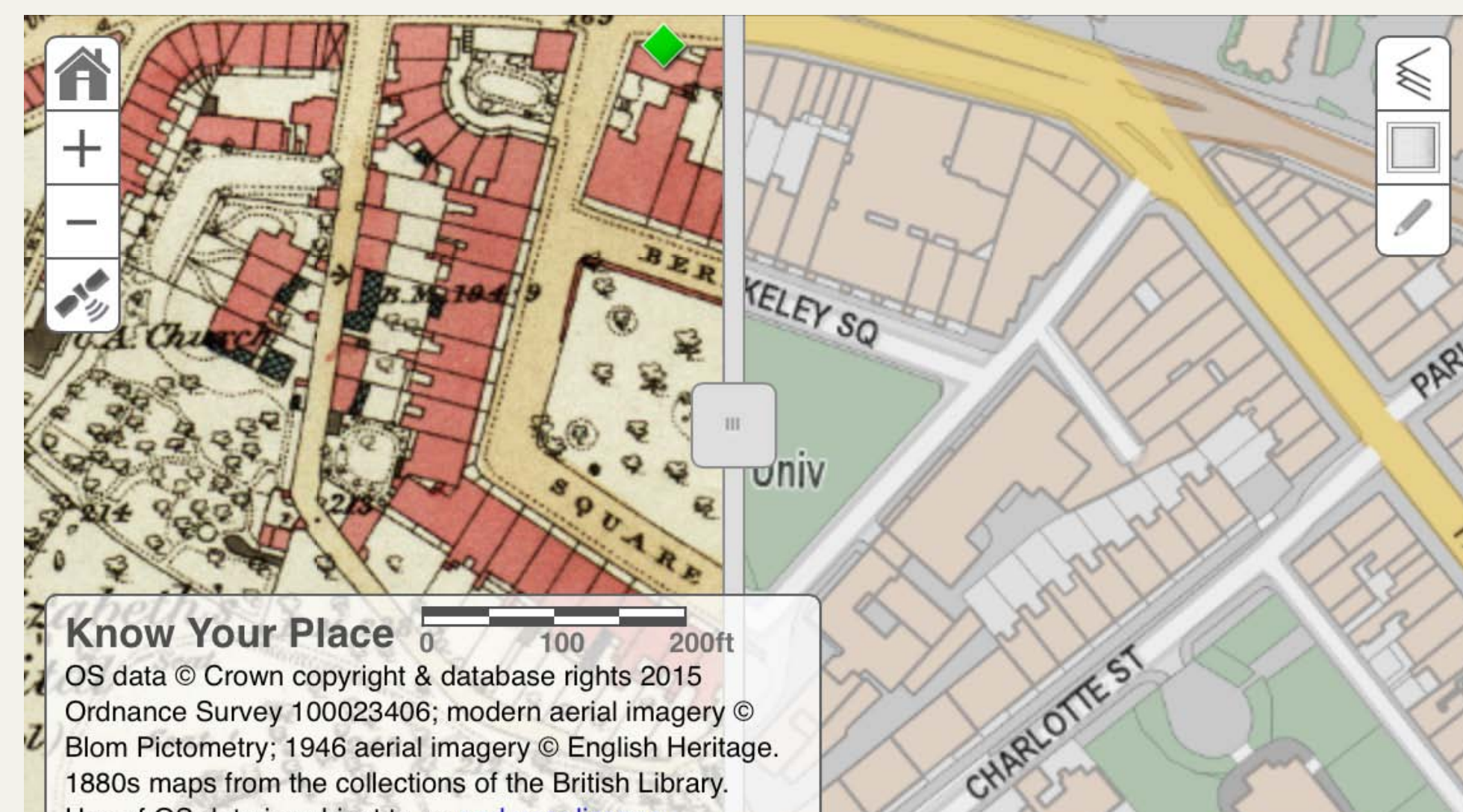
The Drupal website also provided a web-based API that was used by a companion app to fetch and store data. The app is available for Android and iOS devices and was developed using the open-source *Apache Cordova* platform. It provides an easy-to-use crowdsourcing platform that allows community members to take advantage of the sensors on their phone to add places, stories and digital artefacts while 'on the move'.

By taking an *open-source model* it is possible for user groups to use and adapt the software for their own purposes. Communities were also important in testing the software, providing valuable feedback throughout the project.

Know Your Place

<http://maps.bristol.gov.uk/kyp>

The project funded the enhancement of existing tools like Bristol City Council's *Know Your Place* website (ArcGIS) that provides a rich set of contemporary and historic maps and digitised artefacts of historic collections held by the city, providing a controlled and moderated space that forms part of the Historic Environment Record that city planners consult when making planning decisions.



Community Co-Production

By using a truck equipped with the latest audio and video equipment the project was able to provide a mobile engagement space where people could congregate to share stories, explore the city's history and have artefacts digitised. All these tools provided a platform for exploring models of co-production and were used in a number of public events and workshops designed and organised by academics and community groups.



Communities

Bristol Against Apartheid recorded the history of the Bristol Anti-Apartheid group, using material held at Bristol Record Office and through events with activists

Dame Emily Park explored the past, present and future of former mine works now converted to public green space through a community history day

Deaf Community aimed to celebrate the heritage of the Deaf community in Bristol

Green Bank worked with a local heritage group called The Deep End who were converting a neglected chapel in Greenbank Cemetery into a community centre

Knowle West on the Move explored how film and video archive can be used by communities to tell their own stories of place

Mapping History with Local Schools worked to experiment with using digital tools for teaching and learning with Key Stage Three students

Music examined the history of Bristol's Afrikan Caribbean music history with focus on the St. Pauls neighbourhood in the 1970s and 1980s

Women of East Bristol worked with users of the services provided by Single Parent Action Network to research the history of women's work in Lawrence Hill and Easton

Vaughan Postcard Project worked with Bristol Record Office to recruit community volunteers to research and place a substantial digital postcard collection within the context of historic maps on the Know Your Place website

Challenges

It was initially envisaged that the software development would be finished early in the project and, following user testing, would then be used by the communities and co-investigators. It soon became evident that this was not possible or practical; however, the value of ongoing engagement with the technical team ensured that the site was developed with more extensive input from the communities.

The system was originally designed to be an open crowdsourcing platform, but it is now clear that a more sophisticated access-management is needed to allow communities to have control and ownership of their layers - this is especially important for the schools.

Sustainability

The Institute for Advanced Studies at the University of Bristol used and further developed the digital tools to create a new app called *Romantic Bristol: Writing the City*, which combines the city's Romantic period history with present-day responses to that cultural heritage. The app also creates research data by recording (with permission) anonymous data to explore the ways in which walking through a city is altered, enhanced, encouraged and deliberately or subliminally directed by representations of its history.



Contacts

Principal Investigator:
Professor Robert Bickers (robert.bickers@bristol.ac.uk)

Knowledge Exchange Fellow:
Dr Nathan Eisenstadt (n.eisenstadt@bristol.ac.uk)

Technical:
Mr Mike Jones (mike.a.jones@bristol.ac.uk)

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